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FM AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
TO RUEHRC/DEPT OF AGRICULTURE WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3508
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY PRIORITY
RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA PRIORITY 2973
RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS PRIORITY 1331
RUEHJB/AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA PRIORITY 2347
RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA PRIORITY 2705
RUEHLGB/AMEMBASSY KIGALI PRIORITY 0776
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 0219
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI PRIORITY 9937
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 0129
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY 0234
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEHDR/USDAO DAR ES SALAAM TZ PRIORITY
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 0364

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 DAR ES SALAAM 000396

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/E, AF/EPS, AF/RSA, AF/PD AND IO
USAID/DCHA FOR MHESS, WGARVELINK, LROGERS
DCHA/OFDA FOR JMYER, YBELAYNEH, KISAACS, GGOTTILIEB, MMARX,
IMACNAIRN, KCHANNELL, LPOWERS, CABLA
DCHA/FFP FOR JDWORKEN, DNELSON, SBRADLEY
DAA/AFR FOR KALMQUIST
AFR/EA FOR JESCALONA, JBORNS
REDSO/FFP FOR NESTES
REDSO/ECA FOR WKNAUSENBERGER
ROME FOR FODAG
GENEVA FOR NKYLOH
BRUSSELS FOR PLERNER
LONDON, PARIS FOR AFRICA WATCHERS
NSC FOR JMELINE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [EAID](#) [EAGR](#) [ECON](#) [ETRD](#) [TZ](#)

SUBJECT: TANZANIA'S ARMYWORM INFESTATION: AMBASSADOR URGES
MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE TO TAKE SWIFT ACTION TO PREVENT
SPREAD

REF: DAR ES SALAAM 00337

SUMMARY

11. (U) Ambassador Retzer and USAID Director, Pamela White, met with the newly appointed Minister for Agriculture, Food Security and Cooperatives, Joseph J. Mungai, to congratulate him on his appointment as Minister and assure him that the USG continues to support agricultural activities in Tanzania. The Ambassador stressed the serious threat posed by the African armyworm and the need for a proactive response by the Tanzanian Government. Mungai expressed his gratitude to the USG for the USD 50,000 to procure sprayers, protective wear and other equipment to fight the pest (reftel) and identified a point of contact within the Ministry of Agriculture's Plant Health Services Department to ensure proper distribution and use of the USG-funded equipment. In addition, Mungai identified key longer-term priorities for the Ministry of Agriculture including support for irrigation, fertilizer production, and improved seed production. END SUMMARY.

ARMYWORM: AMBASSADOR STRESSED NEED FOR RAPID RESPONSE

12. (U) The Ambassador expressed the USG's concern over Tanzania's armyworm outbreak and urged Mungai to "handle the problem today." The Ambassador told Mungai that without a swift response, next year's food supply could be totally

devastated. The armyworm has already hit Southern Tanzania, destroying over 60,000 hectares of cereal crops during the month of February. The Ambassador noted that the USG would encourage other donors to also provide assistance to address the problem and that both the Ministry of Agriculture and the USG had a job to do educating the Tanzanian people and donors about the danger of armyworm. White added that the concern was not only for Tanzania: while the armyworm outbreak has already hit Southern Tanzania, evidence suggests that the pest is moving North and could affect neighboring countries.

13. (U) On behalf of the Government of Tanzania (GOT), Mungai thanked the Ambassador and White for the rapid USG support of USD 50,000 in equipment to address the armyworm outbreak. Mungai called the armyworm a "serious emergency," and said that, coupled with the ongoing drought, the pest posed a grave threat to next year's crop. Mungai gave assurances that the rapid-response equipment provided by the USG would be properly utilized adding that, "he hoped this was just the beginning." Mungai estimated that Tanzania's total need to combat the armyworm was approximately USD 800,000. (Note: USAID Director White believes it will be double that amount. End note.)

14. (U) The Ambassador and White emphasized the need for the Ministry of Agriculture to identify a point of contact (POC) to receive the USG equipment and ensure proper distribution and usage. William Mwaiko, the Principal Agricultural Officer in the Plant Health Services Department, identified Yusuf Nyakunga, Assistant Director of the Plant Health Services Department, as the immediate POC (Telephone: 255-787-309565) for the USG-funded equipment. Mungai also

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noted that his Ministry had teams in the South and in Morogoro monitoring the armyworm situation on a daily basis. He identified Gasper Malia as the POC for monitoring in Tanzania's Southern regions.

MUNGAI'S PRIORITY AREAS: IRRIGATION, FERTILIZER, AND SEEDS

15. (U) In addition to discussing the armyworm threat, Mungai highlighted several priority areas of support which the Ministry of Agriculture is pursuing. First, the Minister emphasized that increased support for irrigation was critical. Currently, Tanzania has sufficient irrigation for only 250,000 hectares. The Ministry of Agriculture's goal is to increase irrigated land to one million hectares by 2010. Mungai noted that Tanzania had approximately 43 million hectares of arable land but that only 9 million hectares were currently under cultivation. He identified Kigoma, in Northwest Tanzania, as a "sleeping giant" for agricultural production.

16. (U) In line with President Kikwete's demand for increased "chemicalization" of Tanzania's farming, Mungai noted that the Ministry of Agriculture would welcome support for fertilizer production. "Tanzania needs to advance its use of chemicals to increase productivity and move toward commercial farming," the Minister told the Ambassador. In Mungai's view, Tanzania's fertilizer law, passed in 1962, is extremely out of date. He explained that the legislation on fertilizer had been under the Ministry of Livestock, but would now come under the Ministry of Agriculture and would be revised.

17. (U) Increasing both the production and quality of seeds was another key area which Mungai highlighted. For coffee in particular, Mungai noted that research was required to pursue a technique known as "tissue culture" to multiply coffee seed and increase the seed's resistance to bacterial diseases. With intervention, he believed it would be possible to increase Tanzania's current coffee yield of 50,000 metric tons per year to 70,000 metric tons per year. White asked the Minister about the GOT's position on genetically modified seeds; Mungai responded that the GOT did not have a firm

position on biotechnology, but was in the beginning stages of drafting legislation on the issue.

¶8. (SBU) Another notable development Mungai mentioned was the potential revival of pyrethrum in Tanzania, a cash crop which is used in the production of insecticides and other chemicals. Although Tanzania's pyrethrum production collapsed many years ago, Mungai informed the Ambassador and White that a U.S. company from Minneapolis, McLaughlin Gormley King Company (MGK), recently acquired a pyrethrum facility in the Iringa region (central Tanzania). The Minister emphasized pyrethrum's promise as a cash crop and told the Ambassador and White, "I love pyrethrum!" Mungai also applauded USG artemisia interventions and asked that they be expanded.

COMMENT

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¶9. (SBU) While Minister Mungai appeared fully apprised of the armyworm problem and termed the situation an "emergency," neither Mungai nor his Principal Agricultural Officer, William Mwaiko, were aware of the following day's (February 28) meeting called by the Tanzanian office of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and other donors to discuss Tanzania's food shortage and armyworm infestation. White urged the Ministry of Agriculture to play an active role in the meeting and to provide a visual presentation, mapping out the armyworm problem, so that donors could precisely see the extent of the destruction. The Ambassador stressed that while famines and drought are widely understood by the donor community and the Tanzanian people, the devastation which the armyworm could cause is under-reported and not well-understood.

¶10. (SBU) Although appointed on January 4 by President Kikwete, Mungai is currently serving in his second go-round as the Minister of Agriculture. More than 25 years ago, Tanzania's first President, Julius Nyerere, appointed Joseph Mungai as Minister of Agriculture during the days of radical socialism. Mungai noted the drastically different approaches to the agriculture sector in Nyerere's day as compared to President Kikwete: Nyerere was promoting the mobilization of village land schemes under socialism while Kikwete is now trying to lead Tanzania toward more large-scale, commercial farming. Despite changed times and ideologies, Mungai seems to have come full circle in his career: he is back at the Ministry of Agriculture, facing huge challenges such as food shortages and armyworm, and still searching for how to unleash Tanzania's latent agricultural potential.

RETZER